

There are few things more fundamental and primal to our human well-being than a sense of security. Yet *insecurity* is written all over our experience. No passage in the Scriptures quite matches this one for addressing the theme of our *complete security in Christ*. Having described the blessings of our being in Christ – peace with God, union with Christ, freedom from the condemnation of the law, life in the Spirit – Paul now takes a panoramic view of God’s plan and purpose for us and creation - from eternity to eternity – and, as a result, offers this defiant statement ‘*If God is for us who can be against us?*’ There are three great truths about God which constitute his argument.

1. God’s goodness in calling us (v.28-30)

At the heart of this section is the unmistakable truth that God always takes the initiative – in love and grace - and elects and calls to himself a people, now both Jew and Gentile. Precisely because *a good* God has called us according to his *good* purpose, then we can be assured that God works everything for *good* for those who love him. By ‘good’ Paul does not mean ‘a trouble-free life’ (no, all creation is groaning in pain). Rather ‘good’ is defined as his ultimate purpose to conform each of us to the likeness of Jesus (v.29). Paul is so certain about this that even our final glorification is in the past tense, as if it has already happened.

2. God’s generosity in saving us (v.31-34)

Paul uses a very effective argument - from the greater to the lesser, namely that since God has already given us the supreme and costliest gift, his only Son, his intention of love towards us is very clear. And through this gift we have been declared righteous in the sight of the Judge. What is more, there is an advocate for the defence, the Ascended Lord, whose victory over sin and death is constantly before the Father and Jesus intercedes for us. (v.35).

3. God’s love in keeping us (v.36-39)

Again comes a defiant question, ‘Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?’ Martin Lloyd-Jones sees these rhetorical questions as like climbing a staircase and here we come to the top step! Paul catalogues 7 possibilities (v.35b) and ends with ‘danger and sword’ – even martyrdom cannot separate us from God’s love. ‘We are more than conquerors through him who loved us’. Finally Paul names ten more potential barriers to enjoying God’s love (v.38-39) but ends triumphantly ‘nothing can separate us from his love. Our hope is not in *our* love for God but *his* amazing, covenant love for us in Christ! Hallelujah!

Read: Isaiah 50:6-10; Romans 8:28-39

1. This is one of the most lyrical and majestic passages of the whole of the N.T. – written to harassed, vulnerable young believers. It is assuring, combative (notice all the rhetorical questions), persuasive and exciting. What is its overall impact on you as you read it through?
2. What exactly is the ‘good’ (v.28) that God is weaving through all the difficulties of life?
3. God’s gracious choice and ‘predestination’ is often a great area of debate as we try and reconcile it with human freedom of choice and responsibility. How and why does Paul put such emphasis on it here (v.28-32)?
4. What is the force of the argument of v.32? How practically can we keep this argument in the forefront of our minds?
5. In v.33-34 we are invited to imagine a heavenly court room scene (common in the O.T.). What exactly is the scene and why is it so encouraging?
6. What is the context of the quote from Psalm 44 mentioned in v.36?
7. List all the things that potentially stand against us mentioned in v.35-39. Paul is convinced none of these can separate us from God’s love; why exactly is this the case?
8. Reading this passage through why do think it is the case that so often we don’t think and live as if we are ‘more than conquerors’. What is the central lesson we need to take away from this passage?